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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of :
Paton et al. :
Application No. 10/673,358 : DECISION
Filed: September 26, 2003 : ON PETITION
Atty Docket No. 7704.003DIV2 :

This is in response to the paper filed April 9, 2009, requesting that the above-identified application be reinstated pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(a).

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

Any request for reconsideration of this decision must be submitted within **TWO (2) MONTHS** from the mail date of this decision. The reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a)" or "Renewed Petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b)," as appropriate. Extensions of time are permitted under § 1.136(a).

The above-identified application became abandoned for failure to file a response to the NOTICE OF NON-COMPLIANT AMENDMENT mailed June 12, 2008. The Notice set a one-month period for reply. Extensions of time were obtainable under 37 CFR 1.136(a). No response was received and no extension was obtained. Accordingly, the above-identified application became abandoned on July 13, 2008. A courtesy Notice of Abandonment was mailed on February 9, 2009.

In response, this petition was filed. The petition includes a proposed response in the form of an amendment and payment of the petition fee. The petition fee paid is the lesser fee for consideration of revival of the application based on unavoidable delay. However, petitioner maintains that the failure to

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respond was completely unintentional as the "June 1, 2008" Notice was never received. Petitioner states that this conclusion was reached after searching our docketing system, electronic files and paper files.

A grantable petition under § 1.137(a) must be accompanied by: (1) the reply required to the outstanding Office action or notice, unless previously filed; (2) the petition fee set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(l); (3) a showing to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to this paragraph was unavoidable; and (4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in § 1.20(d)) required pursuant to § 1.137(d). The instant petition fails to meet requirement (3).

Decisions on reviving abandoned applications on the basis of "unavoidable" delay have adopted the reasonably prudent person standard in determining if the delay was unavoidable:

The word 'unavoidable' ... is applicable to ordinary human affairs, and requires no more or greater care or diligence than is generally used and observed by prudent and careful men in relation to their most important business. It permits them in the exercise of this care to rely upon the ordinary and trustworthy agencies of mail and telegraph, worthy and reliable employees, and such other means and instrumentalities as are usually employed in such important business. If unexpectedly, or through the unforeseen fault or imperfection of these agencies and instrumentalities, there occurs a failure, it may properly be said to be unavoidable, all other conditions of promptness in its rectification being present.

In re Mattullath, 38 App. D.C. 497, 514-15 (1912) (*quoting Ex parte Pratt*, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31, 32-33 (1887)); see also Winkler v. Ladd, 221 F. Supp. 550, 552, 138 U.S.P.Q. 666, 167-68 (D.D.C. 1963), aff'd, 143 U.S.P.Q. 172 (D.C. Cir. 1963); Ex parte Henrich, 1913 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 139, 141 (1913). In addition, decisions on revival are made on a "case-by-case basis, taking all the facts and circumstances into account." Smith, 671 F.2d at 538, 213 U.S.P.Q. at 982. Nonetheless, a petition cannot be granted where a petitioner has failed to meet his or her burden of establishing that the delay was "unavoidable." Haines, 673 F. Supp. at 316-17, 5 U.S.P.Q.2d at 1131-32.

A review of the application file reveals no irregularities in the mailing of the Notice of Non-compliant Amendment mailed June 12, 2008. The Notice was properly addressed to the attorney of record at the correspondence of address of record and was not returned to the United States Patent and Trademark Office by the postal service. Thus, there is a strong presumption that the correspondence was properly mailed to the petitioner at the correspondence address of record. As stated in MPEP 711.03(c):

The showing required to establish nonreceipt of an Office communication must include a statement from the practitioner describing the system used for recording an Office action received at the correspondence address of record with the USPTO. The statement should establish that the docketing system is sufficiently reliable. It is expected that the record would include, but not be limited to, the application number, attorney docket number, the mail date of the Office action and the due date for the response.

Practitioner must state that the Office action was not received at the correspondence address of record, and that a search of the practitioner's record(s), including any file jacket or the equivalent, and the application contents, indicates that the Office action was not received.

A copy of the record(s) used by the practitioner where the non-received Office action would have been entered had it been received is required. A copy of the practitioner's record(s) required to show non-receipt of the Office action should include the master docket for the firm. That is, if a three month period for reply was set in the nonreceived Office action, a copy of the master docket report showing all replies docketed for a date three months from the mail date of the nonreceived Office action must be submitted as documentary proof of nonreceipt of the Office action. If no such master docket exists, the practitioner should so state and provide other evidence such as, but not limited to, the following: the application file jacket; incoming mail log; calendar; reminder system; or the individual docket record for the application in question.

The practitioners' showing of non-receipt is not adequate. Practitioner states that the Notice was never received based on a search of the docketing system, electronic files and paper files. However, practitioners do not provide, as described

above, evidence of a reliable docketing system. To meet the required showing, petitioner needs to at least provide evidence of a reliable docketing system and of the absence of entry of receipt of this Notice in the docketing system to support a conclusion that the Notice was not received.

Having not made an adequate showing of non-receipt of the Office action, the petition cannot be granted under §1.137(a). On renewed petition, petitioner may attempt to meet the showing of non-receipt.

In the alternative, while the showing of record is not sufficient to establish to the satisfaction of the Director that the delay was unavoidable, petitioner is not precluded from obtaining relief by filing a request for reconsideration pursuant to 37 CFR § 1.137(b) on the basis of unintentional delay. A grantable petition under § 1.137(b) must be accompanied by: (1) the reply required to the outstanding Office action or notice, unless previously filed; (2) the petition fee set forth in 37 CFR §1.17(m); (3) a statement that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to this paragraph was unintentional; and (4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in § 1.20(d)) required pursuant to § 1.137(d).

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By mail: Mail Stop Petition
 Commissioner for Patents
 P.O. Box 1450
 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

By FAX: (571) 273-8300
 ATTN: NANCY JOHNSON
 SENIOR PETITIONS ATTORNEY

By hand: Customer Service Window
 Randolph Building
 401 Dulany Street
 Alexandria, VA 22314

Telephone inquiries related to this decision should be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3219.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nancy" and last name "Johnson" clearly distinguishable.

Nancy Johnson
Senior Petitions Attorney
Office of Petitions